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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1895.

THIS PAPER RECEIVES THE COMBINED TELEGRAPHIC-NEWS SERVICE OF THE SOUTHERN ASSOCIATED PRESS AND THE UNITED PRESS.

## The Venezuela Matter.

As we have said heretofore, the President's message to Congress concerning Venezuela bears abundant internal evidence that when he wrote it he had in mind no such thing as a presidential election. We might have said that diplomatic matters such as the countries concerned are now considering are not settled in a day; and we might have added that internal complications will not hurry up the parties whose duty it is to study and settle such questions.

Read the debate in the United States Senate on Thursday last, and you will see that the United States will have a good deal of time yet in which to decide how our government intends to settle the Venezuela question, and what changes, if any, it intends to allow to be made in the wording of what we have styled Uncle Sam's ultimatum.

An ultimatum is, indeed, a very serious conclusion for any country to come to when such international difficulties are up for settlement as those which now demand the attention of this great country. But our country is so large and so powerful that our agents cannot be charged with being frightened into submission to unjust demands. They are free to act as a sense of duty may call upon them to act.

General Fitzhugh Lee seems to us to understand "the situation." In an interview last Thursday with a Lynchburg reporter, he said in reply to question: "No; months and months and months will pass before the United States commission will report. In the mean time the pugnacious winds will blow themselves out, the angry waters will subside, and a common ground be revealed upon which each of the great English-speaking states can honorably stand."

We say this utterance seems to indicate that General Lee understands the situation. But we would not have anybody suppose that the United States Government is going to allow any dallying in this matter. On the contrary, it will insist upon whatever it may decide and conclude to be its rights in the premises. All the world has its eyes turned towards this country at this time.

## Walter Taylor's Views.

Colonel Walter H. Taylor, who was the adjutant-general of the Army of Northern Virginia, publishes under his proper signature, in the Norfolk Landmark, a letter, in which he takes the position that the Venezuelan case does not, in his opinion, "call for such heroic treatment as that had in contemplation in the President's message."

And he adds: "War is terrible to contemplate. Let us not place ourselves hastily in a position that leaves no alternative but humiliating retraction or annihilation."

Colonel Taylor is a man for whose opinions the people of Virginia have the highest respect; but we doubt if they will agree with him in this instance.

Unless the Monroe doctrine is meant to be a meaningless thing—mere "vaporings"—we ought either to retract it or enforce it. If it is wrong, we should recede from it. If it is right, we ought to stand up for it. As we understand, it is a doctrine promulgated not merely for the protection of the South American republics, but for the protection of these United States against European encroachments.

As our judgment the President has not acted hastily. Arbitration was proposed by him to Great Britain and rejected. Now, before making any further communication to England, he means to see if the representations made to us by Venezuela are without doubt correct. To that end a commission is to be appointed to investigate the boundary-line question. We believe that it will be composed of calm men. It will take several months for them to do their work, and if it appears that the Venezuelans have misrepresented the facts to us, then we have no case, and nothing to complain of. But if the commission find that England is attempting to wrench territory from Venezuela that doesn't belong to England, then we must either abandon the Monroe doctrine—haul down the Monroe doctrine flag—or go to the help of Venezuela should England attempt to use force there.

That there may be a way out of the difficulty without war and without the sacrifice of the honor of our country we earnestly trust. Indeed, the mere suggestion of a war between the United States and England excites such dreadful apprehensions that we cannot but be guided by public sentiment, and against every resource of ingenuity to preserve our national self-respect without bloodshed.

The firecracker nuisance, which is also sometimes a menace to life and limb, has already begun. We suppose that it will diminish with more or less violence from this time on until after New-Year's-Day.

But, whatever the police can do to mitigate the evil, or to confine it to Christmas-Day and New-Year's-Day will be highly appreciated by the general public. On Christmas-Day, by all means, the churches where services are being held should be protected from the outrageous noises to which they have hitherto been subjected. Of course, no person of average intelligence wishes little children to be arrested; nor prohibited from firing crackers on the two days mentioned, but, among other things, they should be warned from the neighborhood of churches, and forbidden to throw crackers under horses' feet.

## Paying Customs-Duties in Gold.

During the war between the States Congress passed a law forbidding any buying and selling of gold anywhere in the United States. The members of Congress who passed this law saw that the price of gold was going up day by day, and supposed that they could put an end to Wall-street speculation in that metal by forbidding anybody and everybody to deal in it, either in Wall street or elsewhere. But alas for the theorists of that day, the consequences of the passage of the law in question was that gold jumped up so high as to alarm Congress and induce that body to repeal the objectionable law. It did not remain on the statute-book a week. Acts of Congress are powerless in the presence of the laws of nature. A law to make all customs-duties payable in gold might refuse in its operation to obey the theories of the doctrinaires and work so badly as to cause a strong and irresistible demand from the people for its instant repeal.

The President has attempted to show how a gold reserve may be rendered unnecessary—that is, by calling in the greenbacks and Sherman notes and replacing them with bank notes. But our confidence in this proposition is small. Besides, any scheme which proposes to retire the greenbacks will meet with the most determined opposition from possibly a majority of the people of the United States.

But the consideration of the Venezuelan question may put a new face upon affairs in Washington. Let us wait a time with patience before we determine to legislate too much upon questions which a new condition of things may place in the background.

The Richmond Dispatch has an excellent editorial on the impropriety of teachers in the public schools receiving Christmas or other presents from their pupils.—The Staunton Vindicator.

Our article was intended more especially to meet the practice of taking up collections in public schools or from public school children. In many cities and States the laws positively prohibit all such collections, and they are objectionable to the majority of the people of Richmond. But in view of the fact that the custom has long obtained here, and that arrangements have already been made by the children to give many teachers presents, we do not propose to urge any action on the part of our School Board or Legislature at this time; but it would be well to have it understood that after the approaching holidays are over those who are in favor of a reform in this respect will call the attention of the proper authorities to the matter.

## The Commission and Its \$100,000.

The United States Senate yesterday passed without amendment the House bill appropriating \$100,000 to pay the expenses of a commission to be appointed by the President to ascertain the division line between Venezuela and British Guiana.

Congress is standing by the President; so are the State Legislatures (and above all) so are the people. And this united and determined front of ours will do more than anything else can to bring England to her senses, and make her count the cost of war. She ought to have accepted our proposal for arbitration; but, not having done so, in the event of the commission sustaining Venezuela's position, she must renew diplomatic negotiations—or be chargeable with the consequences that may follow.

It is doubtful if the commission will find it necessary to visit Venezuela. In a few weeks the warm season will begin in that country. The commission may be able to get all the information that it wants in Washington, the Government of Venezuela having offered to place at its disposal copies of all the maps and documents that it possesses. However, this and many other matters will undoubtedly be left to the commission to decide for itself. What our country wants is the facts.

In the matter of amending our city charter we think that the people will be satisfied if the Legislature puts the gas-works under a commission and creates a board of finance and audit. The latter board should have the authority to direct the labors of the City Accountant. These charter changes and "hands off" the Board of Public Interest would place our city government on a footing that would meet our present wants.

As for the Mayor's powers, these can neither be enlarged nor diminished. The State Constitution states them with great precision, and it gives him vast authority.

There is trouble in store for New York's East-River Bridge Commission, which, on Wednesday, decided to purchase for \$300,000 the charter granted to Frederick Uhlmann and others, composing the East-River Bridge Company. Jefferson M. Levy, of "Monticello," who owns \$5,000,000 worth of property in New York, is going to fight this purchase. He has invited citizens who think as he does on the subject to meet and appoint a committee to conduct a fight in the courts.

It seems to be settled that the Texas is all right, and will prove to be a speedy and formidable battleship, and that of the two new battleships to be built the Newport News yard will get one. The other will probably be built on the Pacific coast. Meanwhile there are rumors that Secretary Herbert will ask Congress for an appropriation to enable him to give the Cramps a contract to build a third ship after their own plans.

Cincinnati, O., December 19.—The Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce, by unanimous vote, adopted resolutions commending the action of President Cleveland in the Venezuelan matter.—Washington Post.

The Jingo is not to be set down as mere boasters. On the contrary, they mean what they say. Nevertheless, there is no war in sight as yet, and it will be six months, as General Lee predicts, before the American commission reports anything for the action of Congress.

be held in Richmond on the 16th of January.

Our understanding of his position is that, while he feels at liberty to express his opinions on public questions through the press in logical and didactic arguments, yet he thinks that it would be improper for him, as a Federal judge, in constant service on the bench, to attend party meetings or conventions, and thus engage in active and combative contention on party questions. So far as we can remember, Judge Hughes has never attended a party meeting since he has been on the bench, and we know of no reason to suspect that he means to break this rule of his.

The country is pretty thoroughly aroused—by Jingo.

## Mater Dolorosa.

(Altruist Interchange.)

Because of one small low-laid head, all crowned

With golden hair,

Forevermore all fair young brows to me

A halo wear;

I kiss them reverently. Alas! I know

The pain I bear.

Because of dear but close-shut holy eyes

Of Heaven's own blue,

All little eyes do fill my own with tears—

What'er their hue;

And motherly I gaze their innocent

Clear depths into.

Because of little pallid lips, which once

My name did call.

No childish voice in vain appeal upon

My ears doth fall;

I count it all my joy their joys to share,

And sorrows small.

Because of little death-cold feet, for

earth's

Rough roads unmeet.

I'd journey leagues to save from sin or

harm

Such little feet.

And count the lowliest service done for

them

So sacred—sweet!

So sacred—sweet!

So sacred—sweet!

So sacred—sweet!

So sacred—sweet!

So sacred—sweet!

So sacred—sweet!

So sacred—sweet!

So sacred—sweet!

So sacred—sweet!

So sacred—sweet!

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So sacred—sweet!

So sacred—sweet!

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